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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by Make Mothers Matter - MMM, New Humanity, and ONG Hope International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status; the International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL), Association Points-Coeur, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, the Catholic International Education Office, the Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the Foundation for GAIA, the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development – VIDES, Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco, the Lazarus Union, the Planetary Association for Clean Energy, Inc., and the Teresian Association, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status; and Soka Gakkai International, a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 January 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Proposals for the focus of the 4th Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education*

This statement reflects views expressed in discussions of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Training of the NGO Committee of Human Rights of CoNGO.

1). The adoption of a cultural approach

During the Panel discussion on the 5th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training that took place during the HRC 33rd session, one of the most repeated ideas was the importance of *the acceptability and cultural appropriateness of the human rights educational programmes*. OHCHR report stressed this challenge as one of the four most important dimensions to implement human rights education. [1] Moreover, several delegates stressed *the need for a sound methodology that took into account different cultural contexts*.[2].

We draw attention to the requirement of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training[3] in article 5 par. 3, that provides that *Human Rights Education and Training should embrace and enrich, as well as draw inspiration from, the diversity of civilizations, religions, cultures and traditions as it is reflected in the universality of human rights*. Par. 4 of the same article stresses that *human rights education and training should take into account different economic, social and cultural circumstances (…) in order to encourage ownership of the common goal of the fulfillment of all human rights for all*.

Target 4.7 of the Framework for Action 2030 is to ensure that "*all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote (…) global citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development*." In order for children from different cultural backgrounds to learn and assimilate human rights concepts, it is necessary that teachers, lay instructors and discussion leaders should always seek to be respectful of cultural diversity, particularly of cultural minority children. This approach is essential for good human rights learning outcomes for minorities of all ages.

As stated in the UNESCO World Report "Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue," (…) *cultural diversity can further the exercise of rights and freedoms, since to ignore cultural realities would be tantamount to affirming formal rights and freedoms without ensuring that they can in practice be rooted and enjoyed in diverse cultural contexts*." It states further: *There is a need to strengthen the foundations of universalism by showing how it can be embodied in a wide variety of practices without being compromised. Cultural diversity is central to human rights. These rights must be appropriated at the local level, not as elements superimposed on cultural practices but as universal principles deriving from the practices themselves. For each culture practice constitutes a pathway to the universal, testifying to our shared humanity (p. 33).*[4]

Finally, the CESCR General Comment No. 13 on the Right to Education already stressed the importance of education to be acceptable. The General Comment understands acceptable as relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality to students and parents. The disconnection between human rights education and the cultural and religious background of parents and students makes implementation difficult. It is essential to adapt and link the human rights education and training to the cultural background of the students.

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[1] OHCHR (2016) Panel discussion on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices and challenges, par 17
link: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/075/50/PDF/G1707550.pdf?OpenElement

[2] OHCHR (2016) ibid, par 27
link: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/075/50/PDF/G1707550.pdf?OpenElement

3 cf A/RES/66/137.

4 UNESCO (2010), *World Report Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, Executive Summary, p.32-33.

The first three phases of the World Programme for Human Rights Education were focused on specific sectors. Nevertheless, the resolution 59/113 that establishes the World Programme does not establish any obligation to focus the different phases on a specific target group or sector. The resolution establishes that the World Programme is *"to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors"* (p.3). For this reason, a focus on the cultural approach to allow a better implementation of Human Rights Education would be compatible with the mandate of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

We hasten to add that we are not advocating the cultural relativism of human rights themselves but rather that the pedagogy of human rights education should reflect the reality of a culturally diverse world.

Stated succinctly, our proposal is that the focus of the fourth Phase be the development and sharing by Member States of culturally sensitive and effective human rights education.

We can mention different examples to illustrate the cultural approach, not only in the teaching methods but also in values as stated in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training cited above.

1. "Les greniers à mots", a research carried out from 2004 to 2007 by the Interdisciplinary Institute for Ethics and Human Rights of the University of Fribourg, supported by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. Exploring African and Arabic languages, it has shown that the diversity of languages promotes a better understanding of universality and reinforces the anthropological sources of human rights.[5]

2. The publication of the Conseil Consultatif des droits de l'homme du Maroc entitled : *La Déclaration Universelle des droits de l'homme et l'ordre juridique marocain*[6]

3. The collection of quotations published by UNESCO, drawn from a wide variety of traditions and periods, which, with their profound concordance enhanced by the very diversity of their origins, would illustrate how human beings everywhere, have asserted and claimed the human rights.[7]

2). The fourth phase of the World Programme should address youth

There are about 1.8 billion young people (between the ages of 10 and 24), which is the largest youth population ever, according to UN data.[8] As the SDGs recognize, youth are "critical agents of change" that will shape the future.[9] Their crucial role in peace building has also been stressed by the UN Security Council in its Resolution 2250 on the *Role of Youth in Peace and Security*.[10] There are growing challenges that disproportionately affect the current generation of youth, who is also especially vulnerable to radicalization that leads to violent extremism[11]. Nevertheless youth play a

5 Cf http://www.unifr.ch/iredh/fr/recherche/diversite-et-droits-culturels/greniers-a-mots.

6 (2000) Rabat.

7 Jeanne Hersch (ed) (1969) *Birthright of Man*, UNESCO, Paris. On this basis A. Fernandez showed that article 1 of the Universal Declaration is founded in different cultures and religions. Cf A. Fernandez (2000) *La Universalidad de Derechos Humanos El articulo primero de la Declaracion en los textos de las culturas y religiones* in Hacia una cultura de los Derechos Humanos, Universidad de Verano de Derechos Humanos, Geneva.

8 UNFPA (2014), *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*.

9UNGA (2015), *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Doc A/RES/70/1.

10 UN Security Council, (2015) Doc S / RES / 2250.

11HRC(2015) *Human Rights and preventing and countering violent extremism*, Doc A/HRC/30/L.25/Rev.1.

crucial role in realizing human rights, peace, and sustainable development as mentioned in the resolution on youth and human rights adopted during the 35th session of the Human Rights Council.[12]

If youth can uphold, protect and respect human rights, they can contribute towards the realization of a 'pluralist and inclusive society', as articulated in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training[13].

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12 HRC (2017) *Youth and Human Rights*, Doc A/HRC/35/L.22

13 UN Resolution on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) A/HRC/RES/16/1